


# The Emotion Project



  
National Alliance on Mental Illness  
Western Carolina  
Funding of this site made possible by NAMI Western Carolina, the community's voice on mental illness. Please click [here](#) to learn more about how you can contribute to their advocacy and support efforts as a member and/or donor. Click [here](#) for more information

Tracey Turner, diagnosed with bipolar and anxiety disorders, began **The Emotion Project** as a way of visualizing and coping with her own illness and now gives the presentation for the insight into mental illness that it offers.

"I am a writer and now a presenter. I have been part of the mental health community as patient and advocate for 43 years. Most of that time – until just 4 years ago – I went undiagnosed.

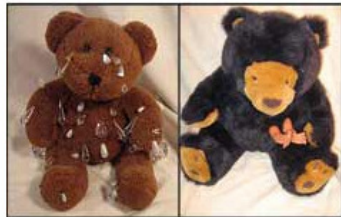
Before my diagnosis, I spent many years self-medicating with alcohol. That is common with mental illness.

That self-medication and the underlying mental illness, cost me nearly everything. Drunk once in a winter snow in Chicago, I lost one shoe going from bar to bar. I either didn't notice or didn't care. I had a fur coat in Chicago and, at one time, I had no coat at all.

I worked for some of the most prestigious advertising agencies in the world; drinking lunch, drinking after work and, ultimately slipping out to drink during work. Later I flipped burgers in a bar.

In 1986, after trying to assault a friend and then being diagnosed as having had a mini-psychotic break, I was put on medication for the first time and told I would probably stay on it the rest of my life. What did all that mean about me? Was I crazy?

In 1989, I stopped drinking and went to AA.



Loneliness

Hope

After years and years of therapy with many therapists, I found one I could do the hard work with. Part of that was working with my psychiatrist and therapist to put a name to my history: bipolar disorder. We worked until we finally found a medication mix that works. For now.

Stemming from my therapy, I began to work to resolve some issues of boundaries in my life and started working with bears because they were there in my house. The first bears were really fetishes, used to work through those issues. They are somewhat horrifying. But through the process, I became very close to my feelings and wanted to express them. And so I worked with stuffed bears again. But these are not stuffed bears anymore. They are anxiety and rage and hope and sadness and fear and other feelings. There are

presently 31 bears in The Emotion Project presentation.

The Emotion Project, as it is presented, includes a more detailed account of my history with mental illness and a walk through the bears, explaining how each one came to be.

It is a unique and powerful presentation. Every audience has been touched in one way or another."

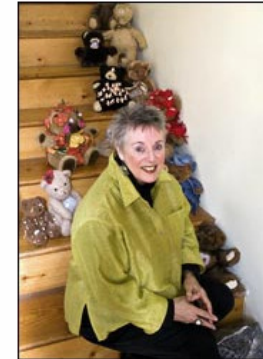
Tracey Turner, Creator and Presenter  
The Emotion Project



Anger Bear



Joy Bear



To contact Tracey Turner or book her and her bears for a presentation, call her at 828-285-8910 or by email [traceyt@theemotionproject.org](mailto:traceyt@theemotionproject.org)

Tax-deductible donations to The Emotion Project may be made online:

[Make A Donation](#)

Or by mail: Checks should be made to North Carolina Mental Hope with "The Emotion Project" on the memo line and mailed to P.O. Box 5504, Asheville, NC 28813

## The Emotion Project

**Mission Statement:** To connect the general public with the mentally ill through the common denominator of feelings.